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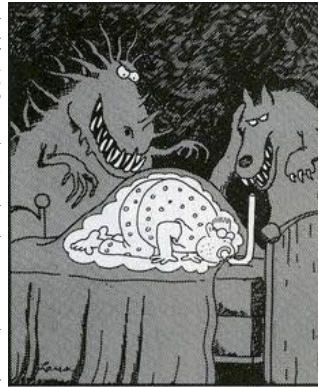
- 7054 Winnetka Ave., Winnetka, CA 91306
- Mail To: P.O. Box 2711, Winnetka, CA 91396
- 818-795-5566 (cell phone)
- W. Bruce Evans, Minister: e-mail to wbe@wolfenet.com

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www.winnetkachurch.com

“...BUT PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR...”

The speech Franklin D. Roosevelt gave at his first inauguration, with the nation deep into the great depression, reeling from financial and emotional shock, contained a core thought that has resonated through the years. “Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself” That quote is nothing more than an empty platitude to a kid who is hiding under the blankets in bed once the lights are turned off and the door is shut. The fear at the time was real. There was a monster who hid under the bed and another squirreled away in the closet; wasn’t there? Nightly what was heard was “go to sleep there’s nothing there, and if there was, once they got you outside under the street light they’d let you go, NOW GO TO SLEEP”



The nightly visitors from under the bed and the closet

It’s not fair to say that fear is a mere childhood experience. Fear can have an immobilizing impact on anyone and at any time. Fear is defined by Miriam-Webster “as an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger.” However there is also another definition listed, “profound reverence and awe especially toward God”. There is considerable comfort seen expressed in Hebrews 13:6, “*The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?*” It seems to address fear from the standpoint of one having the utmost of reverence for God and in so doing is not fearful of what of life can at times present.

However, we are human and at times fear enters in. Consider the disciples who were in the physical presence of Jesus day by day. In the storm tossed sea, the only one not fearful was Jesus. Nor was He frightened by two violent, crazed demon-possessed men who had been thwarting people to pass by (see Matthew

8:23-27) The same couldn’t be said of the disciples. In verse twenty-six of Matthew, Jesus is quoted as having said, “*Why are you so timid, you men of little faith?*” In the King James translation “*fearful*” is used in place of “*timid*”

How many times has Philippians 4:13 been quoted from pulpits around the world? Paul’s expression of “*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*” Perhaps part of the reason why Paul could confidently state such is his having developed a full understanding and knowledge of the closeness of Christ. Earlier in this article Hebrews 13:6 was noted, consider as well verse five,

which states, “*I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.*” With Christ on our side, we indeed have nothing to fear. It is imperative for all to learn to turn and lean on Him.

Note a couple of verses from Romans, chapter eight. “*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?*” (v 31) “*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*” (v 37) Clearly laid out in the eighth chapter is a pattern for the child of God, that no matter what, as long as one remains walking with God according to His directives victory can be enjoyed. Fear not.

The apostle John, writing in his first epistle tied together fear and love. “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*” (1John 4:18) The more we grow in God’s love to that degree fear is dispelled.

“*For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.*” (2Timothy 1:7) (wbe)

THE BULWARK